NUMB. CLXV.

The SPECTATOR.

Semivirumque bovem Semibovemque virum. Ovid.

Saturday, September 8. 1711.

I Have often wiſhed, that as in our Conſtitution there are ſeveral Perſons whoſe Buſineſs it is to watch over our Laws, our Liberties and Commerce, that certain Men might be ſet apart, as Super-intendants of our Language, to hinder any Words of a Foreign Coin from paſſing among us; and in particular to prohibit any *French* Phraſes from becoming Current in this Kingdom, when thoſe of our own Stamp are altogether as valuable. The preſent War has ſo Adulterated our Tongue with ſtrange Words, that it would be impoſſible for one of our Great Grandfathers to know what his Poſterity have been doing, were he to read their Exploits in a Modern News Paper. Our Warriors are very Induſtrious in Propagating the *French* Language, at the ſame time that they are ſo glorioufly ſucceſsful in beating down their Power. Our Soldiers are Men of ſtrong Heads for Action, and perform ſuch Feats as they are not able to expreſs. They want Words in their own Tongue to tell us what it is they Atchieve, and therefore ſend us over Accounts of their Performances in a Jargon of Phraſes, which they learn among their Conquered Enemies. They ought however to be provided with Secretaries, and aſſiſted by Foreign Miniſters, that can tell their Story for them in plain *Engliſh*, and let us know in our Mother-Tongue what it is our brave Country-men are about. The *French* would indeed be in the right to Publiſh the News of the preſent War in *Engliſh* Phraſes, and make their Campaigns unintelligible. Their People might flatter themſelves that things are not ſo bad as they really are, were they thus palliated with Foreign Terms, and thrown into Shades and Obſcurity. But the *Engliſh* cannot be too clear in their Narrative of thoſe Actions, which have raiſed their Country to a higher pitch of Glory than it ever yet arrived at, and will be ſtill the more admired the better they are explained.

For my part, by that time a Siege is carried on two or three Days, I am altogether loſt and bewildered in it, and meet with ſo many inexplicable Difficulties that I do not know which Side has the better of it, till I am informed by the Tower Guns that the Place is ſurrendred. I do indeed make ſome Allowances for this part of the War, Fortifications having been Foreign Inventions, and upon that Account abounding in Foreign Terms. But when we have won Battels that may be deſcribed in our own Language, why are our Papers filled with ſo many unintelligible Exploits, and the *French* obliged to lend us a part of their Tongue before we can know how they are Conquer'd? They muſt be made acceſſary to their own Diſgrace, as the *Britains* were formerly ſo artificially wrought in the Curtain of the *Roman* Theatre, that they ſeem'd to draw it up, in order to give the Spectators an opportunity of ſeeing their own Defeat celebrated upon the Stage: For ſo Mr. *Dryden* has tranſlated that Verſe in *Virgil*.

Atque intertexti tollant aulæa Britanni.

Which interwoven Britains *ſeem to raiſe,*
And ſhow the Triumph that their Shame diſplays.

The Hiſtories of all our former Wars are tranſmitted to us in our Vernacular Idiom, to uſe the Phraſe of a great Modern Critick. I do not find in any of our Chronicles, that *Edward* the Third ever reconnoitred the Enemy, tho' he often diſcover'd the Poſture of the *French*, and as often vanquiſh'd them in Battel. The Black Prince paſſed many a River without the help of Pontoons, and filled a Ditch with Faggots as ſucceſsfully as the Generals of our times do it with Faſcines. Our Commanders loſe half their Praiſe, and our People half their Joy, by means of thoſe hard Words and dark Expreſſions in which our News Papers do ſo much abound. I have ſeen many a prudent Citizen, after having read every Article, enquire of his next Neighbour what News the Mail had brought.

I remember in that remarkable Year when our Country was deliver'd from the greateſt Fears and Apprehenſions, and raiſed to the greateſt height of Gladneſs it had ever felt ſince it was a Nation, I mean the Year of *Blenheim*, I had the Copy of a Letter ſent

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me out of the Country, which was written from a young Gentleman in the Army to his Father, a Man of a good Eſtate and plain Senſe: As the Letter was very modiſhly chequered with this Modern Military Eloquence, I ſhall preſent my Reader with a Copy of it.

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'UPON the Junction of the *French* and *Bavarian* Armies they took Poſt behind a great Moraſs 'which they thought impractic ble. Our General 'the next day ſent a Party of Horſe to reconnoitre 'them from a little Hauteur, at about a Mile diſtance 'from the Army, who return'd again to the Camp 'unobſerv'd through ſeveral Defiles, in one of 'which they met with a Party of *French* that had 'been Marauding, and made them all Priſoners at 'Diſcretion. The Day after a Drum arrived at our 'Camp, with a Meſſage which he would communicate to none but the General; he was followed 'by a Trumpet, who they ſay behaved himſelf very 'ſaucily, with a Meſſage from the Duke of *Bavaria*. The next Morning our Army being divided 'into two Corps, made a Movement towards the 'Enemy: You will hear in the Publick Prints how 'we treated them, with the other Circumſtances of 'that glorious Day. I had the good Fortune to be 'in the Regiment that puſh'd the *Gens d'Arms*. Several *French* Battalions, who ſome ſay were a 'Corps de Reſerve, made a ſhow of Reſiſtance; 'but it only proved a Gaſconade, for upon our preparing to fill up a little Foſſé, in order to attack 'them, they beat the Chamade, and ſent us *Charte* 'Blanche. Their Commandant, with a great many 'other General Officers, and Troops without number, are made Priſoners of War, and will I believe give you a Viſit in *England*, the Cartel not 'being yet ſettled. Not queſtioning but theſe Particulars will be very welcome to you, I Congratulate you upon them, and am your moſt dutiful 'Son, &c.

The Father of the young Gentleman upon the Peruſal of the Letter found it contained great News, but could not gueſs what it was. He immediately communicated it to the Curate of the Pariſh, who upon the reading of it, being vexed to ſee any thing he could not underſtand, fell into a kind of Paſſion, and told him, that his Son had ſent him a Letter that was neither Fiſh, nor Fleſh, nor good Red Herring. I wiſh, ſays he, the Captain may be *Compos Mentis*, he talks of a ſaucy Trumpet, and a Drum that carries Meſſages: Then who is this *Charte Blanche*: He muſt either banter us, or he is out of his Senſes. The Father, who always look'd upon the Curate as a learned Man, begun to fret inwardly at his Son's Uſage, and producing a Letter which he had written to him about three Poſts afore, you ſee here, ſays he, when he writes for Mony he knows how to Speak intelligibly enough, there is no Man in *England* can expreſs himſelf clearer, when he wants a new Furniture for his Horſe. In ſhort, the old Man was ſo puzzled upon the Point, that it might have fared ill with his Son, had he not ſeen all the Prints about three Days after filled with the ſame terms of Art, and that *Charles* only writ like other Men.

Compleat Setts of this Paper, for the Month of Auguſt, are to be ſold by Mr. Graves in St. James's Street; Mrs. Bond at the Old Vine at Charing-Croſs; Mr. Lewis under Tom's Coffee-Houſe, Covent-Garden; Mr. Lillie, Perfumer, at the Corner of Beaufort-Buildings; Mrs. Treganey, near Eſſex-Street; Mrs. Boulter next the Roſe Tavern at Temple Bar; Mr. Sanger at the Temple Gate; Mr. Lloyd near the Church in the Temple; Mr. Knapton in St. Paul's Church-Yard; Mr. Round in Exchange Alley, and Mrs. Baldwin in Warwick-Lane; where alſo may be had thoſe for the Months of March, April, May, June and July.

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The Doctrine of Original Sin, as it was always held in the Catholick Church, and particularly in the Church of England, Aſſerted and Vindicated from the Exceptions and Cavils of the Reverend Dr. Daniel Whitby. By Jonath. Edwards, D. D. and Principal of Jeſus College in Oxon. Oxford, Printed at the Theatre for Henry Clements, and are to be Sold by Henry Clements Bookſeller at the Half Moon in St. Paul's Church Yard.

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